

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

Vertu inks technology deal with TCL Communication

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Vertu Constellation. Image credit: Vertu

By STAFF REPORTS

British mobile phone manufacturer Vertu's new ownership is looking to modernize the brand, starting with a new technology collaboration.

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The phone brand has linked with TCL Communication, entering its first partnership since Vertu was bought by Hakan Uzan in March. This move is part of Vertu's restructuring plan, which will also see new concierge services and lifestyle products introduced.

Under new ownership

Earlier this year, Vertu was acquired by Baferton Ltd. for 50 million pounds, or around \$61 million. Originally developed by Finland's Nokia in the 1990s, Vertu had been owned by China's Godin Holdings since 2015 ([see story](#)).

Vertu's current owner is planning to heighten the brand's global presence, updating its operations without losing sight of its heritage and craftsmanship.

The partnership with TCL Communication, worth \$40 million, will see Vertu use the Hong Kong-based company's technology in 30,000 phones. TCL Communications is both an Internet Service Provider and a mobile phone manufacturer.

Along with making phones under the TCL and Alcatel brands, TCL was the first licensee to create a Blackberry phone under the company's new third party hardware strategy.

"We are delighted to have signed this agreement with TCL Communication," Mr. Uzan said in a statement. "It is the first of many, considerable investments we are making into the business.

"TCL Communication is a valued partner of Vertu, and we hope that this will be the start of a prosperous new chapter in our relationship," he said.



Vertu Signature Touch. Image credit: Vertu

In mid-July, Vertu will begin to roll out limited-edition Constellation X devices and concierge services. September will see a new range of lifestyle products arrive at boutiques.

Also in September, Vertu will debut new luxury brand partnerships and new services and products for markets such as France, China, Russia and the Middle East.

While Vertu still designs and produces its devices in the United Kingdom, with its base in Hampshire, the brand's parent company Vertu AK France is based in Paris. About nine in 10 of Vertu's products are exported to other markets.

Since its founding in 2002, Vertu has sold more than 500,000 phones, which have a starting price of 7,500 pounds, or about \$9,500 at current exchange.

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